hour and any birds in the area can be extremely hazardous to aircraft. This firing range was being sparingly used since 1989 and due to this lot of wild bushes have grown in the area. In 1997, it was decided to reactivate it for practising weapon firing by both helicopters and fighter aircraft. Since the range was not in use for last many years, a large number of wild growth of kikker bushes and small trees had grown over this area and there were a number of unauthorised encroachments. With the help of civil courts and district authorities the area was cleared of encroachments in 1997. To make it fit for practising weapon firing it was cleared of wild vegetation.

Since land in question belong to the Ministry of Defence no permision of Ministry of Environment & Forests is necessary for clearing the wild growth of bushes and trees on such lands. The matter regarding use of Tilpat firing range falls within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Defence.

(c) and (d) Question does not arise in view of (b) above.

Central Schemes for Conservation of Forests in the North-Eastern States

1073. DR. B.B. DUTTA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the schemes taken up by the Union Government for the conservation of forests, wildlife and environment in North-Eastern States during 1996-97 and 1997-98;

(b) the amount provided by Government for this during the said period project-wise;

(c) the achievements made under each project during the said period; and

(d) the budgetary allocation made for these projects during the Interim Budget for 1998-99?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI): (a) to (d) The Ministry of Environment and Forests implements a number of Centrally Sponsored Schemes for conservation of forests, wildlife and environment in the North-Eastern States. The details of such schemes State-wise alongwith financial assistance provided and achievement made during 1996-97 and 1997-98 and outlays for 1998-99 are given at Annesure. [*See Appeendix 184, Annexure No.* 37].

Tiger Population in the Country

1074. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Silver Jubilee year celebration of the Project Tiger witnessed a steady decline in the tiger population in the country;

(b) how the population graph of Indian tiger moved over the period of operation of the project;

(c) the major steps taken to preserve and promote tiger population during the period and the success achieved thereby; and

(d) what further steps are contemplated to promote and preserve the
Indian Tiger?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI): (a) and (b) No, Sir. on the contrary there was a steady increase in tiger population of the country till 1989 from 1973 when Project Tiger was launched. However, there was a decline in tiger population during 1989—93. The details of tiger population in the country